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PEACE WITH DISHONOUR.

A SPEECH

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

MARCH 31ST, 1881.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. EARL CAIRNS,

ON

*The Arrangements made by Her Majesty's
Government with the Boers in the
Transvaal.*

CORRECTED ON AUTHORITY.

PUBLISHED BY THE
NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE & CONSTITUTIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS,

ST. STEPHEN'S CHAMBERS, BRIDGE STREET, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

APRIL, 1881.



THE TRANSVAAL.

SPEECH OF EARL CAIRNS IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, MARCH 31st, 1881.

EARL CAIRNS, in calling attention to the arrangements recently made by Her Majesty's Government with the Boers, said:—It is now nearly three months since Parliament met. During that time, owing probably to the pressure of other business, very little has been said of a subject which has nevertheless greatly occupied the public mind, the state of affairs in South Africa, and especially in the Transvaal. We were informed at the beginning of the Session, in the most gracious Speech from the Throne, that there had been a rising in the Transvaal, and that military operations were in progress for the purpose of suppressing that rising, and vindicating the authority of the Crown. After that we heard of successive disasters to the British forces. There had been before the end of the year an attack upon the 94th Regiment at Madder's Spruit; then in January the reverse at Lang's Nek; and in February, first the battle at Ingogo, and subsequently the defeat at Majuba. We then heard that reinforcements had been rapidly and energetically prepared and sent forward to retrieve these disasters, and that a General who had won his laurels in the East had been sent out to command the reinforcements and to co-operate with another General, hardly less trusted, who had already arrived on the scene. In these circumstances the spirit of the country was sustained. They put trust in the exertions which were being made, and they relied upon the assurance they had received from the Government that the authority of the Crown would be vindicated. We then heard that there were arrangements and negotiations in progress. The Government naturally had a right to decline to enter upon any discussion of those negotiations while they still were in progress, and, on the other hand, it would have been wrong to press the Government for any information at that stage of the proceedings. But still the public relied on the assurance they had received, and in this House we had obtained a still further assurance. The noble Earl the Secretary of State, when the subject was mentioned on the 21st of February, told us that "Her Majesty's Government are taking steps to procure a satisfactory settlement consistently with the honour of the British Crown." (Hear, hear.) As the

Speech from the Throne had announced that the authority of the Crown would be vindicated, so we understood that the Secretary of State desired to assure us that the honour of the Crown was involved in vindicating that authority. Then we received the information that the arrangements were concluded and that a peace had been made. The idea of peace and of a cessation of hostilities is always so welcome that we were disposed to hail with satisfaction the news of this arrangement, and of this peace, and we naturally imagined that, although the terms were not known, yet when they came to be known it would be found that they fully redeemed the promises which had been made by the Crown. (Hear, hear.) Her Majesty's Government have now laid upon the table the telegraphic papers connected with this arrangement. I do not know how much of the satisfaction which first was felt any longer remains. (Cheers.) Some details there are which still are wanting, and with regard to those details my object is to ask the Secretary of State to favour us with some information on matters on which we are left in doubt by the papers before us. But the leading features of the arrangement are clear, and although it may not be the time, until every detail has been supplied, for your lordships to pronounce any formal opinion upon the peace that has been concluded, still I think Her Majesty's Government have a right to know when the papers have been, as far as they have been, laid before us, what is the opinion which may be entertained by us with regard to this arrangement; and they would be entitled to say they naturally concluded, when so much information was laid before us, that we were satisfied with that which had been done when we expressed no dissatisfaction. (Hear, hear.)

I will ask your lordships to remember what the state of affairs was at the commencement of the Session. It was on the 20th of December that the affair which some people called, and not incorrectly, a massacre at Madder's Spruit took place. A portion of the 94th Regiment was on its march under the command of Colonel Anstruther. I do not stop, however, to consider at this moment the precise nature of the occurrence which took place, but your lordships remember that in the result some 70 or 80 out of a force of 157 were killed, and that several, if not all, of the officers were among the number. After this an appeal was made to the Secretary of State from the colony of Natal. Your lordships will find in the Blue Book which was presented to Parliament in February a communication which was made to the Secretary of State on the 29th of December through Sir George Strahan. A deputation of the Legislature of Natal and others requested Sir George to send to the Secretary of State a resolution by telegraph. It was in these terms:—

“A deputation, composed of 15 members of the Legislature and others, Mr Merriman spokesman, request me to send the following resolution by telegraph:—That this deputation, in common with the rest of South Africa, deplores the unhappy state of affairs now existing across the Vaal River, and ventures to urge upon Her Majesty's Government that, in order to effect a settlement of the differences which have arisen and to establish tranquility, it is desirable that some person acquainted with the feelings and opinions of the inhabitants of

South Africa should be appointed as a Special Commissioner to the Transvaal territory to enquire into and report upon the exact position of affairs, the feelings and wishes of those interested, and what arrangements would be most advantageous to the country and most likely to reconcile the inhabitants to the Government of the Queen; and the deputation would further respectfully suggest that the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, Sir J. H. De Villiers, possesses in an eminent degree the qualifications required for such an office."

That was a proposal which at that time, I think, was not unnatural. It was one which might well have been entertained, and if this eminent person, who is said to possess the confidence of all the parties there, and who indeed is one of the three Commissioners recently selected, had been appointed at that time, it is possible that we might have been spared much of what has occurred. But the view of the Secretary of State at the time was different. He replied, by telegraph, on the 30th of December, to Sir George Strahan as follows:—

"Inform the deputation that, while fully appreciating their motives, we do not think the present moment will be opportune for sending a Special Commissioner to the Transvaal."

That was the opinion of the Secretary of State at that time. I think we shall find the ground of that opinion appearing again in the most gracious Speech from the Throne. The same motives which led the noble Earl to conceive that December was not the proper time to meet the proposal which had been made, probably influenced Her Majesty's Government in putting into the mouth of Her Majesty the words of the Speech from the Throne. (Hear, hear.) Parliament met on the 6th of January, and I will ask your attention to these words which were then addressed from the Throne to your lordships:—

"A rising in the Transvaal has recently imposed upon me the duty of taking military measures with a view to the prompt vindication of my authority, and has of necessity set aside for the time any plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs, without prejudice to the interests of the natives, which I have been desirous to confer."

In the Address presented by your lordships in answer to that most gracious speech you thanked Her Majesty for the information we had received that the authority of the Crown would be promptly vindicated, and that not until that was done could the time arrive for conferring the boon upon the European settlers that was indicated in the latter part of the sentence which I have just read. "Rising in the Transvaal," of course, means a rebellion or insurrection: and I now wish to ask the Secretary of State whether the authority of the Crown has been promptly vindicated in the Transvaal? (Cheers.) Has the action at Lang's Nek promptly vindicated the authority of the Crown? (Cheers.) Has the reverse at Ingogo? Has the disaster at the Majuba? (Cheers.) I wish to ask the Secretary of State whether he conceives that after these occurrences the authority of the Crown stood in a higher and

better position than on the 6th of January last, and if it did not what has become of your prompt vindication of the authority of the Crown? (Cheers.) But I wish to call your lordships' attention to the second part of the sentence. The duty of vindicating the authority of the Crown has, it is stated, "set aside for the time the plan for securing to the European settlers that full control over their own local affairs without prejudice to the interests of the natives which I have been desirous to confer." Do these words, I ask, in the mouth of the Sovereign point to a cession of territory? Do they point to an abandonment of territory? Do they point to a dismemberment of the empire? (Cheers.) When the Government, through the mouth of the Sovereign upon the Throne, speak of conferring free institutions upon a portion of the British dominions, it is understood that the Sovereignty of Her Majesty over that portion of the Empire is retained; that while there may be an alteration in the form of government, the Sovereignty remains where it stood before. (Cheers.) I challenge Her Majesty's Government to produce any instance in any State paper in existence where words of this kind in a speech from the Throne were used to indicate or denote the dismemberment of the empire (cheers)—that is to say, abandon the country and leave it free to establish a republic or any form of government they pleased. Upon those words in Her Majesty's most gracious Speech I have a few questions to put to the Secretary of State. Is the arrangement spoken of in the Speech from the Throne, and which was at that time contemplated by the Government, the same as that which has now actually been made with regard to the Transvaal? If it is not—if it is a different arrangement—will the Secretary of State allow me further to ask him, when did the change in the opinions of the Government take place, and why? (Cheers.) If, on the other hand, the Secretary of State says it is the same arrangement which was contemplated by the Government at the time of Her Majesty's gracious Speech, I wish to know why was that arrangement misdescribed in the words I have read? (Cheers.) Why was Parliament, I won't say left in ignorance, but misled as to what was intended by the Government? (Cheers.) Why were words put into the mouth of our most gracious Sovereign which, according to every interpretation of words coming from such a source, meant that the sovereignty of the Transvaal was to be retained? (Cheers.) But I have a further question to ask. If the arrangement which has actually been made is that contemplated at the time of Her Majesty's most gracious Speech, and if the authority of the Crown has not been vindicated, I want to know what we have been fighting about in the interval? (Cheers.) If this arrangement is what was intended, why did you not give it at once? Why did you spend the treasure of the country, and still more, why did you shed the blood of the country like water, only to give at the end what you had intended to give at the beginning? (Cheers.) We know that there are those who have lost in the Transvaal that which was dearer to them than the light of

their eyes. They have been consoled with the reflection that the brave men who died, died fighting for their Queen and their country. Are the mourners now to be told that those men were fighting for a country which the Government had determined to abandon, and that they were fighting for a Queen who was no longer to be the Sovereign of that country? (Cheers.)

But let us go a little further into the history of this matter. I wish to know when it was that the idea in the mind of the Government of vindicating the authority of the Crown was abandoned. There is a very remarkable passage in one of the orders issued by the Secretary of State to Sir George Colley. On the 5th of February the Secretary of State telegraphed Sir George Colley in these words:—

“I think it right to intimate to you, as you have instructions to assume the functions of Governor when you are able to enter the Transvaal, that whenever you may succeed in re-establishing the Queen’s authority there, all questions affecting the future administration and settlement of the country, as well as questions as to dealing with those who have taken part against the Government should be reserved by you for the consideration of Her Majesty’s Government.”

That is a very instructive telegram. It shows at once the construction put at that time by the Government upon the most gracious Speech from the Throne, and that construction is, I think, exactly that which ought to be put upon it. The re-establishment of the Queen’s authority in the Transvaal was the task which the Government put before Sir George Colley, and the re-establishment of the Queen’s authority was the vindication of that authority. (Cheers.) But what becomes of these instructions? The next thing we have is a communication from the President of the Orange Free State—Mr. Brand. How Mr. Brand came to be set in motion I do not know, and it is not my business to conjecture. There are various theories on this subject, but I take what I find in these papers. On the 5th of February, the day on which the Secretary of State telegraphed to Sir George Colley, a proposal came from Mr. Brand through Sir George Colley that the Boers should not be treated as rebels “if they submitted.” How was that received by the Secretary of State? We are here on the first step of a descending scale, which is of an interesting character. The Secretary of State adopts the expression of “submission.” He telegraphs to Sir George Colley,

“I have received your telegram of the 5th. Inform Mr. Brand that Her Majesty’s Government will be ready to give all reasonable guarantees as to the treatment of the Boers *after submission*.”

The question, consequently, now comes to be, What was meant by the submission of the Boers? Well, the submission of rebels means, I apprehend, that they should lay down their arms, and that they should give up the strong places which they occupy in opposition to the Queen. (Cheers.) Unless these things are done, there is no submission at all. But to continue the history of the matter, which is very curious. On the same day—that is to say, the 5th of February—took place the battle of the Ingogo, and from that day

the word "submission" disappears from the telegrams. (Cheers.) It never occurs again. On the 16th of February I find a telegram from the Secretary of State to Sir E. Wood in these terms:—

"Inform Kruger that if Boers will desist from armed opposition" (there is no reference to submission now) we shall be quite ready to appoint Commissioners with extensive powers, who may develop the scheme referred to in my telegram to you of the 8th inst. Add that if this proposal is accepted, you are authorized to agree to suspension of hostilities on our part."

Submission is now removed out of the question. The proposal now is that the Boers should cease from armed opposition. Now, I want to know, what is the meaning of the Boers ceasing from armed opposition? What were the Boers doing? The Boers were in the Transvaal. Our garrisons were beleaguered there. Our forces were marching up to relieve our garrisons, and to re-establish our authority in the Transvaal. The Boers were opposing the advance of our troops. That was the position of things. We were moving; they were opposing. "If the Boers would desist from armed opposition." The meaning of that is that our troops were no longer to be interfered with, that they were to continue their march, that the garrisons were to be relieved, and that our troops were to establish authority in the Transvaal. (Cheers.) But nothing of the kind was intended, and nothing of the kind was done. That was what embarrassed Sir G. Colley, and he said, "I understand what this means if we are to go on and the Boers are to cease; but do you mean that we are to cease and that that is to be the way in which opposition is to come to an end?" Sir G. Colley asks very naturally the question, "Am I to leave our garrisons isolated? Is that what you mean by the Boers ceasing from armed opposition?" These are his words: "Latter part of your telegram to Wood not understood. There can be no hostilities if no resistance is made: but am I to leave Lang's Nek in Natal territory in Boer occupation, and our garrisons isolated and short of provisions, or occupy former and relieve latter?" The Secretary of State answers that the garrisons should be free to provision themselves, and peaceful intercourse with them allowed, but he adds, "We do not mean that you should march to the relief of the garrisons or occupy Lang's Nek, if the arrangement proceeds." What was the consequence? Did opposition cease? Opposition, my lords, triumphed (cheers); it was we who ceased. (Cheers.) "Opposition" had nothing to go on for; it got everything it wanted. (Hear, hear.) We now come to the battle of Majuba on the 26th of February. What was the advice of Sir E. Wood under the circumstances? Did he say, "Cease from opposition; let nothing more be done?" Would that be very like Sir E. Wood? (Hear, hear.) He gave some very striking and pointed advice to Her Majesty's Government. That advice your lordships will find at page 21 of the White Book which I hold in my hand. He says:—

"Reflecting on similar struggles in history, I do not attach much importance to punishing leaders, as did Sir G. Colley, though I would not recommend allowing them to remain in Transvaal, nor would I accept them as representatives of people. In discussing settle-

ment of country my constant endeavour shall be to carry out the spirit of your orders, but, considering the disasters we have sustained, I think that the happiest result will be that, after accelerating successful action which I hope to fight in about 14 days, the Boers should disperse without any guarantee, and then many now undoubtedly coerced will readily settle down."

Sir E. Wood knew that reinforcements were at hand, the strength of the position he was occupying, and he spoke as any one, humanly speaking, would have spoken under the circumstances, with the perfect certainty of the success of the exertions which he was ready to make. (Cheers.) I think it cannot be doubted by any person that when our reinforcements came up there would have been no bloodshed, and that the matter would have been settled with, probably, hardly any exchange of hostilities. (Hear.) But, at all events, that was the opinion of Sir E. Wood, but no notice seems to have been taken of it by the Government at home. The phrase about ceasing from armed opposition was repeated and repeated in every telegram from that time from Downing Street, and nothing else. (Hear, hear.) The first variation of the phrase, so far as I can find, came not from Downing Street, but from Mr. Kruger. The Boers are very shrewd men. They are not misled by captivating phrases, and what did Mr. Kruger think of this phrase, "cease from armed opposition?" He put a construction on it which your lordships will find at page 28. He said.—"We are very grateful for the declaration in the name of Her Majesty's Government that under certain conditions *they* are inclined to cease hostilities." (Cheers, and a laugh.) It is not the Boers, you will observe, it is the Government who are inclined to cease from hostilities. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Kruger quite understood the telegram: he read between the lines; he is a clever man, and he does not talk about the Boers ceasing opposition, but of the disposition of the English Government to take that course. But what, let me ask, was the final basis on which Mr. Kruger came into this arrangement? There was no repudiation of the construction which he put on the offer of the Government. As your lordships will find at page 25, he would have nothing whatever to do with the telegram of the Secretary of State of February 8, and the reason he gives is that if he accepted it, it would be like admitting that the Boers were in the wrong. He speaks of holding to Sir G. Colley's telegram of the 16th of February, a letter of the 21st of February, another telegram of the 12th of February, and a letter of the 29th of January. These are four documents which Mr. Kruger puts forward, and he says that it is upon the footing of these four documents that he is prepared to enter into negotiations. Here I may say that I have a question to put to the Secretary of State which is of some importance. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY said it might be well to inform the noble and learned lord at once that he had never been put in possession of the telegram of the 16th of February nor the letter of the 21st. That of the 29th of January, he only saw in the newspapers.] Nothing can be further from my intention than to suggest

that the Secretary of State is in possession of those documents. I know his candour too well to doubt that if they were in his possession he would have laid them on the table. But there is something more important. This telegram was brought to the notice of the Secretary of State, in which Mr. Kruger says, "Now, understand, I am going to enter into negotiations with you on the footing of these four documents." The Secretary of State says he has not got the documents, but without them how could he know how the negotiations were to be conducted, or what Mr. Kruger meant? Why did not the noble earl say, the moment he got this telegram, "I do not know what you refer to; you speak of documents which ought to be in the possession of the Government but which are not." But I pass to something still more important. What is the final statement of Mr. Kruger in his telegram? It is this, that the only basis on which he will enter into negotiations is the restoration of the Republic. Short of that he says he will not treat, and with that document before them the Government, if they entered into negotiations, of course did so on the terms of Mr. Kruger, which embraced the restoration of the Republic. (Cheers.) That is the common sense of the matter, whether you are dealing with Boers or Englishmen. So much for the history of the transaction. These, then, my Lords, are the six stages of the "Surrender's Progress," they are almost worthy of the pencil of a Hogarth. There is first a patriotic and almost passionate determination to vindicate and restore the authority of the Crown. In the second place comes a lower offer—let there be at least submission on the part of the Boers. Thirdly, we reach by this ladder of degradation, a still lower platform—no longer vindication of the authority of the Crown, no longer submission, but cessation from armed opposition with a strong intimation that there would be nothing to oppose. (Cheers.) What comes next? The advice of your General to settle the country by acting on your military power, and that advice disregarded. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Kruger then comes upon the scene, and his view is, "It is you, and not we who are to cease from hostilities." And what is the last? Mr. Kruger again says, "Cease from hostilities; go into negotiation, but only on the terms of our having everything we ever asked for, including the restoration of the Republic." (Cheers.)

Well, now I come to the terms of this surrender. In the first place, I have a question to ask as to the authority of the persons with whom you are treating. Have you thought who they are who were negotiating with you, and with whom you have made your agreement? What are we told about this in the papers before us? The first intimation we have is the view of Sir E. Wood, who as I said just now, stated that he would not treat with Mr. Joubert or Mr. Kruger. He did not accept them as the representatives of the people. That was his view. What was the view of the Secretary of State? He did not agree with the view of Sir E. Wood, and answered him in these words

—"We should make no exception as to the persons with whom we will negotiate, requiring only that they should be duly authorized representatives of the Boers, with power to act on their behalf." How were they duly authorized? Will the Secretary of State inform us? I am bound to say, on behalf of Messrs. Kruger and Joubert, that they seem to have very great doubt about their own authority. They at every turn tell you that they are shaking in their shoes for fear their acts will be repudiated by the Boers. And what finally did they say to Sir E. Wood? Sir E. Wood said, "They asked, had I the power to recognize him (Kruger) as representing the Boer Government, and did I represent the English? I replied 'Yes.'" Well, it was quite true that Sir E. Wood represented the English, but had he the power to accept Kruger as representing the Boer Government? The Secretary of State required that the persons with whom we should negotiate should be duly authorized. I find no authority whatever. (Cheers.) This is not a mere technicality; I should think very little of the point if it were. It is a matter of very considerable importance. Mr. Kruger is undoubtedly very apprehensive as to whether his acts will not be repudiated. We see every day in the ordinary channels of information that the opinion commonly entertained in the neighbourhood is that it is likely there will be a civil war, and that there are two parties, if not more, in the country. Well, if there should be a civil war, which side are we going to take? Are we going to side with the loyal Boers against the Triumvirate, or with the Triumvirate against the loyal Boers? (Cheers.) Suppose that everything that Kruger has done should be disavowed, what is to happen? If this were a matter that would be finished and done with when done, I could understand our being ready to run some risk. But this is an arrangement which is to run on for six months. There are all sorts of things to be done under it, and if these things are not done the arrangement will not be of the slightest value to us. If it comes to pass that the acts of those who made this arrangement are repudiated, we shall have no power to insist upon the performance of any of the things to be done under it. Is it consistent with the dignity or with the interest of this country to accept the words of a Triumvirate who have with considerable violence seized upon the government and to assume that they have authority to bind all the inhabitants of that country? (Cheers.)

Now let me come to the terms. The first is—"the right of the Transvaal people to complete self-government." I want, in the first place, to know how it came to pass that this term, conceding at once complete self-government (as it is called) was made by Sir E. Wood? I think something has dropped out here—some paper is missing. Of course, I don't mean to say that the Secretary of State has it, but it must be somewhere. But how does the matter stand according to the evidence of the book before us? The Secretary of State, on March 12, said—"The Commis-

sion would be *authorised to consider* the following points," and the first is "complete self-government under British suzerainty." The Commission would be authorized to do that—that is to say, that when the Commission was appointed it would take the matter into consideration and determine whether there should be self-government, and in what form. I suppose that is the meaning of the words. Well, what happened next? Your lordships will remember Mr. Kruger's communication, in which he says—"I am going into the conference upon the basis of the restoration of the Republic, and upon no other basis." I find on the part of the Secretary of State neither any acceptance of what Mr. Kruger said nor any repudiation of it—nothing about it. The next step is the stipulation by Sir E. Wood that there should be complete self-government. Now, when did the Secretary of State authorize that stipulation to be made? What he did authorize was that the Commission should consider it. What is done is that the stipulation is without any reference to the Commission, actually made and agreed to. I know Sir E. Wood pretty well, and I am satisfied that he never went an inch beyond the authority given him. What I want to know is the way in which the authority was given him. Will the Secretary of State give us the information? Is the Secretary of State, or is he not, the head of the Colonial Office? Is somebody else conducting these negotiations? (Cheers.) I trust we may have an explanation of this matter for the sake of Sir E. Wood, if for no other reason. (Hear, hear.) My next observation is this: We have got here the term "complete self-government to be given to the Boers." Those are not Sir E. Wood's words. He is a soldier who does not use jargon of that kind. He talks plain English, and never called the abandonment of the territory of the Crown and the setting up of a Republic complete self-government. (Cheers.) That is not what a soldier would call it. (Hear, hear.) I think it is impossible not to see what these terms were inserted for. Their insertion is an effort—a feeble effort—to square what was done with the words of the most gracious Speech from the Throne. (Cheers.) If you had said what was true—I mean what was accurate—you would have said, "The Transvaal is ceded to the Boers; the annexation is cancelled; the Republic is restored, and the Queen has no longer anything to say to the territory." (Hear, hear.) That is the English of what is being done. Who can doubt that that is the real effect of these transactions? (Hear, hear.) The Transvaal at this moment is the property of the Crown. When this treaty is carried out, the Transvaal will cease to be the property of the Crown. Is that not dismemberment of the Empire? Is that not cession of territory? Is that not abandonment of the dominions of the Queen? And, forsooth, you call this, as if you were giving free institutions to a colony, local self-government! (Cheers.) My Lords, you are giving Ireland a pretty lesson as to what you mean by local self-government. (Hear, hear.) Our fellow subjects across the channel are very fond of using that term. Take care

that you do not teach them it has a meaning which will make them still fonder of it. (Cheers.)

But now, I have something more to say upon the subject of this cession of territory. I do not desire to raise any legal question at this moment, but I wish to enter my protest against this straining and stretching of the prerogative of the Crown. We have heard a good deal of late years in the way of charge against straining the prerogative of the Crown. Take care, lest you strain it as it has never been strained before. I want to know what right the Crown has to abandon territory. It is a very difficult question, about which a good deal could be said. I recollect what was done in the case of the Orange Free State. There was much doubt entertained as to how that State was to be given up, and in great doubt the Secretary of State at the time determined under the peculiar circumstances of the case to repeal Letters Patent by an Order in Council and not to ask for an Act of Parliament. But in the case of the Orange Free State there had been no war, and the Imperial Parliament had never legislated upon the subject. In the case of the Transvaal the subjects of the Queen were in rebellion, and the English Parliament had stepped in and had voted money and legislated in a form which embraced the Transvaal. But, my lords, do you recollect what was done a hundred years ago in the case of the American States? Did the Crown cede those States by its prerogative? Look back at the statutes. You will find there an Act of Parliament which authorized the Crown to cede those States, and until that Act was passed the Crown was not authorized to treat with the rebels and to cede that territory. My lords, I do not wish to encumber the case with any further argument upon the point; but I desire to express my grave doubts as to the course which the Government are pursuing. If they are right by the letter (which I doubt) they are certainly grievously straining the spirit of the prerogative.

Well, now I come to the next term, "Protection for the natives of the Transvaal." Protection for the natives of the Transvaal! That is indeed something to provide for. The Commission, we are told, at page 7, will have to consider what securities shall be taken as to the future treatment of the natives. What "securities?" Now, my lords, let me say a few words upon this question. What are "the natives of the Transvaal?" There seems to be some doubt about their number. Nobody says they are less than 400,000; some say 500,000. [LORD KIMBERLEY.—About 700,000.] I believe the number is nearer 700,000 but I wished to be under the mark. These four or five or six or seven hundred thousand are now subjects of the Crown of England, and beyond all doubt so far as they are concerned they desire to remain subjects of the Crown. The Commission, you say, is to consider how they are to be protected. But what are they to be protected against? There is one thing they have to be protected from, which we find described in a despatch of the Administrator, Sir Owen Lanyon. The way

in which he describes their state is this—your lordships will find it on page 6 of his letters:—

“The unfortunate natives have suffered most from this outbreak because of their loyalty to Her Majesty. Numerous instances have been reported in which they have been wantonly shot down. They have been forced to work in the camps, and their property and cattle taken to supply the commissariat of men who had large flocks and herds of their own to draw upon. Were anything needed to show the necessity of Her Majesty’s rule over the Transvaal it would be found in the reign of terror which exists and the sufferings which have been imposed upon these unfortunate natives.”

But that is not by any means all. What is the history of these Boers? In the years 1833-4-5, after Great Britain had abolished slavery, the Boers fretted against the restraints of our law of freedom, and they left the Cape Colony, in which they had been living, and “trekked,” as it is called, over the border and went up beyond the Vaal. In the year 1852 a treaty was made. We knew what their habits were; that they were slave-owners; that it was agreeable to their notion of right. The Sand River Convention was made in 1852. One of the terms was that there was to be no slavery north of a certain limit. My lords, you know that that term of the Convention has been continuously and systematically disregarded. The Boers have practised slavery. My lords, they practise it now in a way which is extremely formidable to deal with, because it is not as if the moral sentiment of the people were against slavery, and only certain wrongdoers were violating the law. But the Boers have not brought the mild and beneficent influence of Christianity to bear upon their understanding of Holy Writ. They go back to the Old Testament, and they find in it—or they think they find in it—a justification for these practices; and they hold that if slavery is not a divine institution it is at least permitted. What is the practice of these people? I take one authority—I might adduce fifty from the Blue Books, but I select one authority from one of the Blue Books, which is a statement given by an unprejudiced witness. It is from a Colonial newspaper, the *Cape Argus*—

“The whole world may know it, for it is true, and investigation will only bring out the horrible details, that through the whole course of this Republic’s existence it has acted in contravention of the Sand River Convention, and slavery has occurred, not only here and there in isolated cases, but as an unbroken practice has been one of the peculiar institutions of the country, mixed up with all its social and political life. It has been at the root of most of its wars; it has been carried on regularly even in the times of peace.”

That description seems to me to be of great and grave importance. (Hear, hear.) But, my lords, even in the legislation of this people you will find sanctioned that which is, under a thin disguise, actual slavery. The disguise is the guardianship of orphans. In the Transvaal it would appear, as some one has said, as if all the black children were orphans. (Laughter.) Every child which they can get hold of is subjected to that which, in their views, is perfectly legitimate. We heard in this House only three weeks ago, from

the lips of the Secretary of State himself, the story of the Boer chief who brought home over the border, or from some other quarter, 32 Caffre girls, whom he sold for 10s apiece in his own neighbourhood. (Hear, hear.) Now, my lords, this is the nation you have to deal with. These are the four five six or seven hundred thousand people whom you have to protect. This is the system against which you have to protect them. My lords, this country has made great sacrifices, great exertions for the purpose of suppressing or extirpating slavery. I shall be surprised, indeed, if this country tolerates the handing back into that which is really a liability to slavery, a nation of hundreds of thousands of people who, at this moment, are free British subjects. (Cheers.) If this thing is to be done, at all events, it shall not be done in a corner. It shall be done in the light of day, and as far as my feeble voice can reach, I will endeavour to explain and expose the real character of the act which is to be done. (Cheers.) Well, but you say, the Commission is to consider the question of the treatment of the natives. What can the Commission do? What is the protection which these people require? Recollect what the Transvaal is. It is a country larger than France. Homesteads are scattered over the country twenty or thirty miles, or much more, apart from each other. And what you have to watch over and superintend is what goes on in each of these homesteads. My lords, how is that to be done? Are you going to occupy the country with an armed occupation? What less are you going to do? There is one protection and one only which can avail for the protection of the coloured people. That is the protection of courts of justice, deriving their authority from the British Crown, and supported by the power of the British Crown. Unless every native of the Transvaal can come before a British court of justice and say, "I am a free man, or a free boy, or a free girl, and I demand the protection of the British Crown as a British subject;" until that can be done, day after day, there can be no protection for the native inhabitants of the country. (Cheers.) My lords, I read just now from the gracious Speech from the Throne some words which I did not think at the time had the meaning which it now appears they bear. It is the passage which speaks of securing the rights of European settlers "without prejudice to the interests of the natives." Without prejudice! It ends like a lawyer's letter. My lords, is it possible that the annihilation of the rights of 700,000 British subjects in the matter of freedom is to be spoken of as an arrangement which is not to prejudice the rights of the natives? (Cheers.) My lords, I recollect when this country was greatly moved at certain instructions from the Admiralty which were supposed to imply that a slave who took refuge in an English ship might be surrendered to his owner. Has this country so altered its views

* The Secretary of State in reply to this question answered, "The stipulation which was made at the Sand River Convention will be simply renewed"—*Times*, April 1, 1881.

with regard to slavery that it will permit hundreds of thousands of British subjects to be handed back to a system which really is slavery as much as any slavery that ever prevailed in the world? (Cheers.)

What comes next? "The control of foreign relations is to be reserved." What, my lords, is the meaning of that term? I know what this term means in the Congress Halls of Vienna, or Berlin, or Paris, or London. What I want to know is the meaning of the term as applied to a half-civilized race like the Boers. What are the foreign relations of the Boers? Do you mean their relations with Portugal? We do not want them reserved, because Portugal is our ally. What are the foreign relations of the Boers? I will tell your lordships what they are. The foreign relations of the Boers are with the Zulus, the Swazis, the Pondos, and, if there be any other native border tribes; and the foreign relations of the Boers consist of stealing cattle across the border of the Zulus, and the Zulus stealing cattle across the border of the Boers, and Zulus and Boers grazing cattle by trespass on each other's grounds, and the Boers illtreating the Zulus when they come into the Transvaal, and the Zulus illtreating the Boers when they come into Zululand. (Laughter.) These are the relations which are grandiloquently termed the foreign relations of the Boers, and which we have reserved. Are we really going to reserve this treasure? (Cheers.) Are we really going to reserve squabbles about cattle stealing and grazing over limits, and complaints of illtreatment on one side of the border or the other? I want to know from the Secretary of State is that his view of the foreign relations which he is so anxious to keep for us? (Cheers.) But if so, how are we to deal with them? Suppose that a Boer is illtreated by the Zulus in their country, and the Boers want redress, must they ask our leave before they seek it? Or suppose the Boers are attacked by the Swazis, are we going to defend the Boers or to forbid them defending themselves? Are you going to make military provision for maintaining these foreign relations, or, on the other hand, are you going to say to the Boers that they shall do this, or that, or the other, and yet refuse to defend them for following your advice, which brings them into trouble? (Cheers.) That brings me to another question. Are we going to be protectors of the Boers or are we not? Now, I will deal frankly with your lordships on this subject. When I read over this book I did not find in it one word implying that we were to protect the Boer Republic, and I said to myself: "A very foolish thing to reserve the foreign relations of the Boers, but at all events we are not saddled with the duty of protecting this people in their foreign relations." But my illusion was broken by a document, which I find, not in this book, but in other channels of information. It is in a communication from Sir Evelyn Wood. It is dated Durban, March 24, and is published in the newspapers:—

"The Colonial Secretary to-night issued the following communication from Sir Evelyn Wood:—"Terms of peace have been signed. The Boers have gone away. Free trade intercourse permitted throughout the Transvaal. A Royal

“Commission is to assemble at once to consider all points left in abeyance and recommend to the Imperial Government what, speaking generally, shall be the Eastern boundaries of a self-governing republic, which is to have a British Resident and to be under a British protectorate.”

Is that an authentic document or not? The Secretary of State shakes his head. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—I do not know.] The noble earl does not know whether the Boer republic is to be protected by us or not. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—I beg the noble earl’s pardon. I did not say that. I said I did not know whether the document quoted is or is not authentic.] Then, I suppose, the noble Earl can tell us whether this statement in the document is correct or not. It is issued by Sir Evelyn Wood. It is a very serious thing, and I should be very glad to hear that there is some mistake about it. I have no wish to press the document if it is unauthorized. Bad as other things are here, I shall be glad to hear that there is not to be a protectorate. But the document is issued on the spot. You may not know of it, but it has been issued in the country, and the people of the country will believe it. (Hear, hear.)

Well, now I come to the next point. The Transvaal will be under the suzerainty of the Queen. I hope your lordships will not suppose that I am going to give a learned or antiquarian explanation of what the word suzerainty means. I have no intention of doing anything of the kind. I am content to take the word upon the negative and affirmative meanings which we have received from the Government. The negative meaning we have received from the Prime Minister. He says that suzerainty does not mean sovereignty. Well I know very well that it does not (laughter); and what is more, if it did the Boers would not have accepted it. (Cheers.) It is just because it does not mean sovereignty that they have submitted to it. (Hear, hear.) What does it mean? What it means is described by Sir Evelyn Wood, and his glossary—his interpretation—may be found at page 29 of the papers. He defines suzerainty to mean this, “that the country is to have entire self-government as regards its own interior affairs, but that it cannot take action against or with an outside Power without permission of the suzerain.” That is to say, the foreign relations of the Boers are reserved. (A laugh.) Now, my objection to that is this. I object to your taking a word and coupling it with the name of the Sovereign of this country, and putting a meaning on the word which is not the real meaning—which is a conventional meaning; because it is perfectly clear that whatever may be the real meaning of the word, what it does not mean is that foreign relations are reserved. It is quite clear that it does not mean that. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—Why?] Why? Will the noble Earl produce any book, any State paper—any instance in history—in which a Power which had no connection with another Power except through the one circumstance of foreign relations being reserved was called the suzerain of that other Power? If this is the meaning of suzerainty,

that wherever the foreign relations are reserved you have a case of suzerainty, the consequence is that the Sovereign of this country is the suzerain of Afghanistan. Because the Sovereign of this country, according to your treaty, has control of the foreign relations of Afghanistan. [The EARL of KIMBERLEY.—What treaty?] I am willing to be corrected, but we have understood that the arrangement with Abdurrahman is that the foreign relations are reserved. (Hear, hear.) But that is of very little importance. What I do care about is this. I object to your coining a meaning for a word—a word which has another meaning, I object to your taking possession of a word and giving it a special meaning for a particular purpose, and then connecting it with the Sovereign of this country. Why, you might as well take the word Archimandrite, and say that by that term you mean that Foreign relations are reserved, and then say that the Queen is the Archimandrite of the Transvaal. (Laughter.) You have no right to take a word and give it a meaning which is your meaning and not the meaning of the word. And I object to your coining by the prerogative a style for the British Sovereign hitherto unknown. But I will tell you why the word is taken. It is quite palpable what the reason is. The word is selected for this reason. It is selected in order that you may go on the one hand to the Boers and tell them—and tell them truly—“Suzerain does not mean Sovereign; suzerainty does not mean sovereignty; you may be quite satisfied:” and then that you may come home here and jingle in the ears of the unthinking people of the country the word suzerainty, and leave them to think that it has the sound and semblance of, and some connection with, sovereignty. (Loud cheers.)

Now I come to the Commission, and I want to know what is the authority that this Commission is to have and how is it to be supported. I know what has happened with regard to the Boers. The Boers, when the Commission was talked of, proposed not unnaturally that they should be represented upon that Commission. They asked that they should have two members, and they would have agreed to be bound by its decision, perhaps, had they been represented. But that was declined. It was decided that there must be no Boers on the Commission at all. I do not find one word in these papers showing that the Boers have consented to be bound by what this Commission will do. (Hear, hear.) I cannot find a word binding even the Triumvirate. We hear from various quarters that there is very great indignation as to what this Commission is to do, and we hear mutterings both loud and deep that the Boers will not be bound by anything the Commission does. What we may naturally ask is—Suppose the Boers refuse to be bound, how are you going to support the authority of the Commission? What authority have you at this moment in the Transvaal to support it? You have the same authority that you have in Abyssinia. You may invade Abyssinia and you may invade the Transvaal, but until you invade the Transvaal you have no authority there. (Cheers.) Your garrisons are cooped up and you can-

exercise no authority by compulsion. Suppose you mean to enforce it by invasion, what is your position with regard to invasion? Your reinforcements, where are they? Three or four regiments have been ordered home. Your General is coming home in the packet ship—that is to say, if he can find room among the numbers who are doubtless hurrying away from a land which you are making uninhabitable for Englishmen. (Cheers.) The spirit of your troops is lowered, the authority of the Crown is discredited; and what about the loyal Boers? I do not know how many of them there are. I know that various opinions are entertained on that subject. Some say they are the majority; a great many people think so. It is quite clear that Mr. Kruger and Mr. Joubert think they are in great numbers, for they are much afraid of them. (Hear, hear.) Well, but if you had entered the Transvaal in the present state of affairs, these loyal Boers would have been your friends and supporters. Will they be so hereafter? You have betrayed them once; do you suppose they will ever let you betray them again? (Cheers.) They will know much too well for that. Those loyal men will for the future be arrayed against you along with the rest of the nation. That is the way in which you are going to support your Commission.

But, my lords, I find as regards this Commission a very remarkable statement, as to which we must have some information from the Secretary of State. It appears, among other things, that the Commission is to consider whether there shall not be taken off the Transvaal a portion of territory to the east of the 30th parallel of longitude. There is about as much land there, by the look of it, as England and Scotland together. Therefore, the portion in question may be a tolerably large slice. I see that it is said in the papers that the Boers will not consent to have anything taken off the Transvaal; but I know not how that may be. But for what purpose do the Government wish to separate the piece of land to the east of the 30th parallel from the rest of the Transvaal? The idea appears to be that it is to be some “buffer,” as it is called, between the land of the Boers of the Transvaal and the countries to the east of that territory. I don’t suppose that you want a “buffer” between the Boers and the Portuguese. Remember that to the east of the 30th parallel you have first the Portuguese, then Amatonga, and then the Zulus. You want to separate the Boers from the natives of Amatonga and of Zululand. The intervening piece of land I take it for granted you do not mean to leave as “no man’s land,” without any owner. If you do, either the Boers will take it again, or the Swazis or the Zulus will do so. Are we then to keep that land and to interpose between the Boers, the Swazis, and the Zulus? We have some right to know what the Government intend to do. We are not to be hood-winked as to a matter which is all-important in regard to the policy to be pursued in South Africa. You know very well that that intervening piece of land will be of no use to you as an interval between the Trans-

vaal and the native tribes unless you garrison it with British troops. Are you going to garrison it with British troops? Is that the policy of the Government? Let us know it if it is, because nothing more disastrous could occur to us than that, after giving up the Transvaal and exciting all the loyal natives and the loyal Boers against us we are to end by having a chain of garrisons along the eastern part of the Transvaal, which is most isolated from support. (Cheers.)

I come next to the provision that until the completion of the arrangements with the Boers our garrisons are to remain, are to have food, but are to have no ammunition. (Hear, hear.) No ammunition is to be brought by us into the country of the Transvaal. What does this mean? I own that I am ashamed to be the person to explain it. Do your lordships remember what has happened? What were our Transvaal garrisons at the commencement of the war? Our soldiers were cooped up in them; they were surrounded; our troops were marching from Natal to relieve them. In substance, though not in form, the garrisons were prisoners; they could not move out. Our troops were marching to relieve them. You are going to leave these garrisons there. What will their position be? I see calculations made as to whether they have ammunition for a week, for two weeks, or for three. It does not matter in the least whether they have ammunition for one week, for two, or for three weeks; if you have not the right to supply fresh ammunition their ammunition is limited, and they are at the mercy of the Boers around them. (Cheers.) And while you in form leave this country to imagine that you are doing something in their favour by arranging that these garrisons are to remain in the Transvaal, the truth and the English of it is that these garrisons are hostages in the hands of the Boers. (Cheers.) That is where the Government leaves them: those English troops are hostages in the hands of the Boers. This reminds us of the painful occurrences at Potchefstroom. There was a time when this country would have expressed a stronger opinion about what has happened at Potchefstroom than it has yet done. What has happened? There was an armistice agreed upon between Sir E. Wood and the leaders of the Boers. What were the terms of that armistice? I will read it to your lordships. At page 22 it is said that the third term of the armistice is that "Mr. Joubert undertakes to send notice of the armistice and its conditions to the respective garrisons." (Hear, hear.) Remember, it was for the Boer commander, Mr. Joubert, to do this, and not for us. The armistice was made on the 7th, and the garrison had to surrender 14 days after. (Hear, hear.) I hear that there was a convoy of mules going on from Sir E. Wood with provisions for this garrison, and that this convoy of mules did not, could not, make the distance of 200 miles in 14 days. Very possibly; but that has nothing to do with the matter. Mr. Joubert was not to send his notice by a convoy of our mules. He personally undertook to send notice to the garrison; and does anybody

say that messengers could not traverse in the Transvaal a space of 200 miles in less than 14 days? I heard with surprise the noble Earl say that he and the Secretary of State for War were conferring on this matter, and that they had not received sufficient information. My lords, I should have thought that 10 minutes, or even 10 seconds, would have been sufficient for any English Minister to know what ought to be done under the circumstances (cheers), and that in 10 seconds after the receipt of the news there would have been flashed from Downing Street, with the lightning speed of the electric wire, a message to the Boer Triumvirate, not that any life that had been lost should be restored—that, alas! could not be done—but that every arm that had been taken must be restored, the ammunition must be given back, full indemnity must be made for every loss, and that every word written with regard to the surrender of Potchefstroom must be absolutely and completely cancelled and obliterated. (Cheers.) And, my lords, if that has not been done, I do maintain that never before in the history of England has such an act occurred and such an act been allowed to be so long unredressed. (Renewed cheers.)

And now I come to the stipulation as to Lang's Nek. What is the provision with regard to it? As the Boers, we read, have agreed to withdraw from Lang's Nek and to disperse to their homes, Sir E. Wood promises not to take possession of that position, nor to follow them up with troops, nor to send ammunition into the Transvaal. Lang's Nek is in the colony of Natal. The Transvaal is our country, too, but Lang's Nek is in Natal. The Boers retire from Lang's Nek, and we in Natal are bound hand and foot; our troops are not to occupy Lang's Nek. My lords, can we speak patiently of this? (Cheers.) Not to occupy Lang's Nek! What is the explanation of the Prime Minister about this? He says these words only mean that the Boers were dispersing and there was not to be a pursuit of the Boers. Well, if that was what was intended, a very few words would have been sufficient—not to occupy Lang's Nek for 24 hours, or for a day, or for a week. But an absolute provision not to occupy Lang's Nek! My lords, was ever such an insult offered as this, even according to the explanation of the Prime Minister? (Cheers.) I can hardly trust myself to state it. Are we, are this great and spirited nation, gentlemen and men of honour I trust, making peace with the Boers, telling them that we do make peace with them, that they are to disperse (as one of its terms) to their own homes, and are they to turn round and tell us, "That is all very well for you, but we don't trust you; we believe that at the moment of our dispersing, notwithstanding the peace, you would turn round and follow us and pursue us, and we therefore bind you not merely to make peace with us, but not to occupy positions in your own country from which you could pursue us?" Was ever such an insult offered in private life, and is our nation so lost to all sense of honour that it can sit down under such an insult as that which the Prime Minister offers by way of explanation? (Cheers.)

I come now to the next point. There is to be a Resident at the capital of the Boers, but there is to be no interference in the internal affairs of the country. Now, how is the Resident to be supported—I do not mean by money, but by force? The Boers are a rough sort of people, and even in our short intercourse with them during the last two months some rough things have been done. I do not suppose that this Resident will be very popular, and I wish to know, without anticipating the use of any extreme violence, how he is to be supported in the event of his being insulted. Or are you going to send him into the country without any support? If so, I need only remind the members of Her Majesty's Government that that was precisely what they denounced when it was done in Afghanistan. I trust we shall have an explanation on this point. (Hear, hear.)

Then I come to the amnesty, the terms of which are very remarkable. The amnesty extends to all, including the leaders, and excepts only persons directly responsible for acts contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. And in Sir E. Wood's final agreement we find that the Boer leaders said they would gladly co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in bringing to justice those who were directly responsible for acts contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. Now, who are these men? We know very well to whom these words ought to apply—namely, to the murderers of Captain Eliot, and to the authors of the massacre at Madder's Spruit. The Boers are to co-operate with us in bringing them to justice; but what does this mean? The murderers of Capt. Eliot are Boers in the Transvaal; they are nine in number, and are perfectly well known to everyone there. The murder was committed in broad daylight, and in the midst of the homesteads, so that every one knew what had happened. The leaders of the Boers are able to hand them over to us, and to tell us that they will co-operate with us is to invert the real position of affairs, for they are in possession of the Transvaal, and we can do nothing. It is for us to require them to hand over to us those persons who are outside the pale of civilized warfare, instead of promising to co-operate with us. (Hear, hear.) But who are the others? You remember the affair of Madder's Spruit, and the account of it that has been communicated to us by the Government. The circumstances of the attack I will read to your lordships from the Official Report of Sir Owen Lanyon. He says:—

“The circumstances of the attack upon Colonel Anstruther's men—a force consisting of 268 men, women, and children—are told in a few words. Having selected their spot for the attack, the mounted force of the rebels surrounded the straggling wagon-train while on the line of march, and sent in a flag of truce to the officer commanding, and while he was reading the letter from the Triumvirate, and replying verbally that his instructions were to proceed to Pretoria, and that he must obey those instructions, the attacking force of rebels was, under cover of the flag of truce, advancing upon and surrounding the soldiers; and immediately the answer was given the rebels opened a deadly

fire, picked off the officers, and killed and wounded 157 of the small English force. The number of the dead now amounts to 70."

And further on he adds :

"The surrounding and gradual hemming in under a flag of truce of a force, and the selection of spots from which to direct their fire, as in the case of the unprovoked attack by the rebels upon Colonel Anstruther's force, is a proceeding of which very few like incidents can be mentioned in the annals of civilized warfare."

My lords, did I hear aright the other night a reply given that the Government had received no information to lead them to think that this massacre was not inside the rules of civilized warfare ? Did your lordships hear that in this House ? I trust there is some mistake, and that the noble Earl will rise and tell us that that is not what he meant to convey, and that the idea will not go forth that a transaction such as I have described is, according to the view of an English Government, within the pale of civilized warfare. (Cheers.)

And now as to the position of the English and the loyal Boers. I see in this paper some suggestion that somebody or other is to look after their interests. These loyal Boers number many thousands, of whom many are refugees in neighbouring countries, but many still remain in the Transvaal. I do not know whether it is true, as we read the other day, that Mr. Kruger said he would rather kill 20 of them than one English soldier ; but if there is any truth in these words, they show the temper in which the loyal Boers will be regarded by those who are now in the ascendant. And what have they to rely upon ? I remember that Sir Garnet Wolseley told them (I trust to my memory for the words) that the rivers might run back to their sources, or the sun rise in the West, before the Transvaal ceased to form part of the British dominion. (Hear, hear.) They relied on that assurance ; but was the word of Sir G. Wolseley of less avail than that of Sir Evelyn Wood ? And, if Sir E. Wood's word is now to be relied on, was Sir G. Wolseley's word not to be taken before ? Can you suppose that anything that this Commission can recommend, any promise that can be extracted, will prevent these Boers, when they return home, from regretting bitterly the day that they believed the word of an English general ? (Cheers.)

I cannot weary your lordships by going into a further examination of the details of this arrangement, though there is still much that might be said. I have risen, my lords, from the perusal of these papers with feelings which I find it difficult to describe. It is not easy, in the midst of the events which pass around us, to realize the character of the history we are creating for future ages ; but we can understand and look back upon the history of past times, and infer from this the manner in which we shall be regarded by those who come after us. It is just 200 years since a page was written in the annals of England, darkened by the surrenders of Burgoyne and Cornwallis. Those were surrenders made by generals at a distance from, and without communication with, home—on their own responsibility—in great emergency—and without the

possibility of any alternative. They were events, however, which both at the time and long afterwards deeply touched our national pride. But it will be recorded hereafter that it was reserved for the 19th century, and for the days of telegrams, to find a surrender, with reinforcements at hand, and every means for restoring the power and vindicating the authority of the Crown, dictated, word for word, by the Government at home. I observe that this arrangement is somewhere styled the Peace of Mount Prospect ; My lords, I much doubt whether it will not go down to posterity as the Capitulation of Downing Street. (Cheers.) You have administered a bitter cup to Englishmen abroad and Englishmen at home. And you have made the draught unduly and unnecessarily bitter. Surely some of the ingredients might have been spared. I wish you could have chosen for the conclusion of such a capitulation some other agent than one of the bravest, the most intrepid, the most promising generals in the service of the Queen. (Cheers.) I wish you could have spared our troops the intense mortification of being paraded in order to see a half civilized enemy marching off in triumph with arms and accoutrements captured from British soldiers. (Cheers.) I wish that while still the Transvaal remains, as you say it does, under our control, the British flag had not been first reversed and then trailed in insult through the mud. (Cheers.) I wish that the moment when you are weakening our Empire in the East had not been selected for dismembering our Empire in South Africa. (Cheers.) These are the aggravations of the transaction. You have used no pains to conceal what was humbling, and a shame that was real, you have also made burning. (Cheers.) But the transaction, without the aggravations, is bad enough. It has already touched, and will every day touch more deeply the heart of the nation. Other reverses we have had : other disasters. But a reverse is not dishonour, and disaster does not necessarily imply disgrace. To Her Majesty's Government we owe a sensation which to this country of ours is new, and which certainly is not agreeable.

“ In all the ills we ever bore

We grieved, we sighed, we wept ; we never blushed before.”

(Loud cheers.)





